

## Integrated Regional Water Management Planning

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IRWM planning involves the coordination and integration of water planning activities occurring within a defined region to improve and maintain the reliability of the region's water supply. IRWM planning recognizes that water supplies, water quality, and natural resources are connected and, as such, focuses on projects that produce multiple benefits in those areas. IRWM planning typically involves both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

Both the 2005 and 2009 State Water Plan Updates identify the expansion of IRWM as one of two "initiatives for reliable water supplies." As the 2009 Update states, "Integrated regional water management enables regions to implement strategies appropriate for their own needs and helps them become more self-sufficient." Through voter-approved bond measures – Proposition 50 in 2002 and Proposition 84 in 2006 – the state has made available up to \$1.5 billion to support IRWM planning and implementation in various regions of California.

The Water Authority, the city of San Diego, and the county of San Diego joined together in 2005 to form a Regional Water Management Group (RWMG), which defined the San Diego IRWM planning region as the portion of San Diego County that is tributary to coastal waters (Figure 8-1). The RWMG then worked with a regional advisory committee to write the first San Diego IRWM Plan, which was approved in 2007 by the Water Authority Board, the San Diego City Council, and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. DWR formally accepted the plan in 2009. Preparation of the San Diego Region's IRWM Plan was required for the San Diego planning region to apply for state funding. It also formed the foundation of long-term IRWM planning in the region. For detailed information on the San Diego IRWM Plan, visit the Plan's website:

<http://www.rmcwater.com/clients/sdirwmp/home.html>.

**Figure 8-1**  
**San Diego IRWM Planning Region**



In 2008, DWR awarded a \$25 million IRWM grant to the San Diego planning region. The funding is supporting 19 projects listed in the San Diego IRWM Plan that, in total, benefit the entire region. Project sponsors include the Water Authority and seven of its member agencies. All of the projects are designed to provide multiple benefits. Almost \$18 million of the requested funding was designated for projects that had as their primary objective “water supply diversity.” Nine of the projects, which received a total of \$5.9 million, included water quality protection as one of their objectives.

Proposition 84 allocated \$1 billion to DWR to support IRWM planning and implementation in California. An amount of \$91 million is earmarked for the San Diego Funding Area, which comprises the planning regions for San Diego, South Orange County, and the Upper Santa Margarita River Watershed. (DWR will use 5 percent of the \$91 million to cover administrative costs, leaving the San Diego Funding Area with \$86.5 million.) According to a memorandum of understanding adopted by the three planning regions in 2009, the San Diego region will receive approximately 78 percent of this amount. The San Diego RWMG intends to use this funding as it becomes available to implement more projects listed in the San Diego IRWM Plan.

The San Diego RWMG thus far has received two funding grants from DWR’s Proposition 84 IRWM grant program. A \$1 million planning grant will support the region’s update of the 2007 San Diego IRWM Plan so that it complies with new state guidelines and requirements. The update will expand

the scope of the San Diego IRWM program to include land-use planning, integrated flood management, and the program's relationship with the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board. As part of the Plan update, the San Diego RWMG also will support salt and nutrient management planning in the region to protect water quality.

The San Diego planning region also was awarded a preliminary implementation grant of \$7.9 million from the Proposition 84 program. (As of this writing, DWR has not finalized this grant award list.) The funding will support 11 projects that, like the projects in the Proposition 50 grant, in total provide multiple benefits to the entire region. Project sponsors include the Water Authority and two member agencies. Almost \$5 million of the funding is designated for projects that will increase the region's water supply or protect drinking water quality, or both.

The San Diego IRWM Program supports the UWMP by promoting regional planning and supporting projects that aim to increase water supply reliability and improve surface water and groundwater quality. IRWM planning and funding will help to make possible water supply projects in the areas of seawater desalination, recycled water, local surface water, and groundwater, all of which are identified in this 2010 Plan as part of the region's projected mix of water resources. The IRWM Program also supports water conservation, another key element of the 2010 Plan.



El Capitan watershed project



Wetlands construction project at Safari Park – San Diego Zoo